P.E.I. ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

1990

ANNUAL REPORT

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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Honorable Gilbert Clements
Minister
Department of the Environment
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown, PEI
C1A 7N8

Dear Mr. Clements:

In accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act, I have the honour of presenting the annual report of the Environmental Advisory Council.

This report covers the period from January 1, 1990 to December 31, 1990.

Respectfully submitted,

Preston MacDonald
Chairman

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental Advisory Council consists of a committee of 13 Island citizens who volunteer their time to provide advice to the Minister of the Environment.

In addition to making suggestions to the Minister on environmental concerns across PEI this committee reviews the activities of government departments as they affect the environment.

Summarized below are highlights of the 1990 review.

Agriculture

Although there is agreement within the Department that soil erosion continues to accelerate, and although large sums of money have been identified for use to promote sustainable agriculture, soil degradation is not being effectively addressed.

FORESTRY

There should be a greater emphasis on activities which encourage restructuring of Acadian Forest type. The Department of Forestry is to be commended for efforts to include avifaunal wildlife considerations in their work and is encouraged to expand this work to include other wildlife. Council urges caution in proceeding with the proposed cogeneration plant.

TRANSPORTATION

The Department of Transportation & Public Works is beginning to place greater emphasis on erosion control. This is to be commended. An environmental specialist to guide and co-ordinate a province wide program is needed.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

There is need for government communities and interest groups to work together to develop detailed management plans for each river system on PEI. With such co-operation, enhancement efforts can lead to vastly improved habitat, which will result in improved animal populations, increased recreation and economic benefits for our Island.

COASTAL ZONE

Coastal zones are an economically important part of our Island, yet degradation of water quality continues in our estuaries. The public should be more aware of the underlying causes as well as remedial actions to improve these problems.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION CONTROL

The public must be better informed about monitoring programs, and have improved access to information which has been collected.

LANDSCAPE, LAND USE PLANNING AND TOURISM

The Province should be more active in participating with non-government agencies to secure protection for environmentally significant sites. This would include support for acquisition.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Education is the basis for sound individual, community and government action. There must be increased emphasis on enhancing public knowledge about environmental matters. A comprehensive environmental education program for the school system should be implemented.

LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Environmental Impact Assessment must encompass impacts on the Island resource base, particularily in the case of impacts of Island soils and forests. There is a need to develop additional regulations governing food processing effluent in PEI. Public participation in Environmental Impact Assessments and Public Hearings needs improved government support in terms of timing and funding.

CONCLUSION

The actions of government departments indicate a gradual acceptance and implementation of the PEI Conservation Strategy goals. However Council was frustrated by the slow response to requests for information from some departments. The importance of developing co-operation with the Environmental Advisory Council should be recognized by all levels of government.

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INTRODUCTION

The PEI Environmental Advisory Council is made up of thirteen individuals appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to advise the Minister of the Environment on environmental matters. None of the members are civil servants, nor do they receive any financial compensation. During 1990 the size of the Council was expanded from twelve to thirteen members.

The Environmental Advisory Council was established as a recommendation of the Provincial Conservation Strategy which was accepted and then tabled in the Legislature by the Government of PEI in 1987. The recommended duties of a Conservation Council were to include:

- reviewing progress on the Conservation Strategy and presenting an annual "State of the Environment" report to the Legislature.
- recommendating on the distribution of conservation funds and the conservation awards.
- coordinating effective efforts among private groups in the field of conservation.
- advising a Minister or Executive council on new programs and policies.
- providing liaison with the proposed conservation center.

Note:

Quotes from the Conservation Strategy have been underlined to facilitate comparison between recommendations of the Strategy and the activities and recommendations of the Council, which have been typed in bold print.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Section 4(2) of the Environmental Protection Act sets out the Councils responsibilities. The Act provides that:

"(2) the Council shall:

(a) serve as an advisory board to the Minister (of the Department of the Environment)

(b) perform such functions as may be prescribed by regulations".

The mandate for the Environmental Advisory Council as prescribed by the Act is somewhat vague, in order to be all encompassing. In discussions with the Minister, he advised Council that he felt that nothing of an environmental nature should be out of bounds for the Council to investigate.

To better define the Environmental Advisory Council mandate, the following terms of reference were developed by council and subsequently approved by the Minister:

1. To advise the Minister of the Department of the Environment on matters referred to it by him or the public under the Environmental Protection Act;

2. To report annually to the Minister on submissions received, research conducted, investigations undertaken, and recommendations made under the Environmental Protection Act;

3. To advise the Minister on environmental matters related to activities in relation to the Provincial Conservation Strategy;

4. To make recommendations to the Minister on conservation or environmental improvement awards;

5. To make recommendations to the Minister respecting opportunities for environmental improvement protection programs or projects;

6. To recommend to the Minister public education projects or programs;

7. To make recommendations to the Minister respecting support for community, private and non-government programs and project.

8. To advise the Minister on legislative proposals as they relate to environmental protection and enhancement;

9. To advise the Minister on such matters as he may direct.

10. To perform such functions as may be provided for by regulations under option 4.2(b) of the Act.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The year 1990 was especially important for government with respect to the environment because of completion and release of the Royal Commission on the Land. This document contained many excellent recommendations related to the environment. It is hoped government will consider them very carefully and implement some of these policies in the very near future.

Council was concerned about the degree of importance placed on inquiries and recommendations by Council. On occasions when requests for information were made of departments, the responses were slow and sometimes inadequate. Sustainable development and conservation are critical to the future of PEI, as noted and supported by government in the PEI Conservation Strategy. Virtually all departments and agencies of government have an impact on the environment. It is critical that government departments place a high degree of importance on implementing the Conservation Strategy, and on liaison with the Environmental Advisory Council.

The Council suggests that the Environmental Advisory Council report to Executive Council. Such a liaison would allow the Environmental Advisory Council to pursue its activities without being viewed as part of an individual department. Council suggested that this would enhance its ability to promote the Conservation Strategy within all government departments. This same rationale has resulted in both the Rural Development Strategy and the Womens Secretariat reporting to the Executive Council.

The Environmental Advisory Council was pleased to note the significant growth of community initiated environmental projects. In several cases these projects involved hundreds of thousands of dollars. Communities are developing a pride, seeing improvements and recoginzing potential for their local environment. We view the development of this environmental affinity, which the Conservation Strategy fosters, as being crucial to overcoming environmental problems in PEI. Sustainable development, recycling, habitat restoration etc., must not be viewed as government activities but rather as activities in which communities and individuals participate. The ultimate objective of the Conservation Strategy - **"to develop within the people of PEI a way of life based on conservation and sustainability"**, is taking a foothold but must be nurtured.

There must be opportunity for public review of the Sustainable Development policy, environmental education program, as well as

the Conservation Strategy itself. To attain and maintain public support for the Conservation Strategy, as was originally intended, periodic public review of the document is required. With current heightened environmental awareness, this review is now timely.

AGRICULTURE

SOIL EROSION

"Soil degradation, primarily erosion, is the single most important resource problem facing the province"

The Council's level of concern about soil degradation continues to be very high. Council views this as the most significant environmental problem facing the Province. Therefore, we believe it is incumbent upon the Department of Agriculture to allocate time and resources towards solving this problem which reflect the magnitude of the problem.

During the year, Council members expressed concern about soil erosion during meetings with the Minister of Agriculture and Departmental staff. We were informed by the Minister that the problem of soil degradation in PEI continues to accelerate. Nevertheless, Departmental staff related that the level of participation by Island farmers in the Soil Conservation Demonstration Program of the Federal-Provincial Soil Conservation Agreement has been limited. These observations, indicate that greater emphasis must be placed on making farmers aware of funding opportunities available to them to reduce erosion. Demonstration projects would make farmers in the vicinity, more aware of the benefits of erosion controlling activities.

1. **The Department should find methods to further stimulate public awareness within the farming community regarding soil degradation and ways to alleviate it. This educational effort must be at a heightened intensity, reflective of the level of the problem.**

"We have known about the consequences of soil erosion for many years. We have yet to put into place effective methods to control it"

Council remains concerned about the priority given soil degradation problems by the Department of Agriculture. While the three year Federal-Provincial Soil Conservation Accord began in 1989, Council noted that the soil conservationist position specified therein was not filled until year 2 of the Accord. This does not indicate that a high level of priority was assigned to this problem. On the positive note, Council was informed that the Department of Agriculture has established a 9 member soil conservation working group. Council looks forward to positive action in the coming year(s) emanating from the work of this group.

2. **Soil degradation should be given higher priority by the Department of Agriculture. Council is encouraged by the establishment of the soil conservation working group and anticipate positive actions from their initiatives.**

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

"Future generations of Islanders will derive their livelihood from the same resource base that we use today."

Council was concerned about the demise of the sustainable agriculture section. In response to questions about the elimination of the sustainable development section, the response provided was that this action was taken because, "everything the department does is related to sustainable agriculture". While this all encompassing position may be commendable, it is of value only if funding and manpower truly impact on all sections. It does however leave the program without a focus and without a clear cut evaluation process.

We were informed of a mission statement being considered by the Department of Agriculture. However, this did not provide Council with the assurance that the definition of sustainable agriculture under which the Department is operating will ensure the development and operation of an ecologically stable agriculture strategy in PEI.

The Department of Agriculture is currently managing very large sum of monies earmarked for the development of "sustainable agriculture" (Twenty-two percent of the 5 year $25 million Federal Provincial Cooperative Agreement, A 3 year $1.8 million Federal-Provincial Soil Conservation Accord, and additional funding for environment impact work).

Clearly, very extensive funding is available to assist this province in developing and implementing a "sustainable agriculture" strategy. Given this high level of funding, Council urges the Department to specifically define sustainable agriculture so that the funding may be directed towards that end. With the availability of this very significant funding it is hoped that emphasis on sustainable agriculture, which in Council opinion has not yet materialized, is increased.

3. **In light of the high funding level earmarked for sustainable agriculture, Council urges the Department to develop a clear and comprehensive definition of sustainable agriculture. Council urges the Department of Agriculture to also make farmers more aware of funding programs and the criteria for participation therein.**

PESTICIDES

Council was provided with the opportunity to make a presentation to a national review of the pesticide control program for Canada. This presentation is listed in Appendix A.

Council was pleased to note the implementation of a pesticide collection day. Abandoned chemicals presented a significant hazard to PEI's environment. With the major clean up in 1990, remaining unwanted chemicals should be much less common. Future disposal costs are hence likely to be reduced.

4. **Council recommends an agricultural chemical collection day take place on an annual basis.**

CONCLUSION

The disparity between efforts to address soil degradation in PEI and the severity of the problem remains very high. It is incumbent on the Department of Agriculture to intensify its educational and promotional efforts to reflect the magnitude of the problem.

The Department of Agriculture is currently administering millions of dollars in the name of sustainable agriculture, yet Council is concerned about the effectiveness of this program. Without clear emphasis, Council believes the province is burdened in its progress towards sustainable development.

FORESTRY

REFORESTATION

"... most of the better timber was removed. Natural regeneration occurred from poor stock."

During the year the Environmental Advisory Council was informed that a "Hardwood Working Group" had been established by the Department of Forestry. This group is focusing on three areas: native seed sources for rare hardwood species, protection of genetic integrity of rare hardwood species, and the development of hardwood plantation techniques. We commend the Department for establishing this committee and encourage further allocation of departmental resources towards such efforts.

Council concurs with the thrust of the Royal Commission on the Land, that significant effort toward restoration of Acadian forest type is required in the province. Council suggests that the hardwood working group focus on the restoration of the Acadian Forest, and be renamed the Acadian Forest Restoration Working Group. Council feels that ultimately, the resources of the Department of Forestry should, at the very least, be more evenly split between this effort and the more conventional activities in support of "industrial forestry".

In addition to the above mentioned points of focus, Council suggests the working group allocate time and resources to issues pertaining to existing hardwood stands in Prince Edward Island. Council stresses more emphasis public education on the value of these wooded areas. In addition, Council would like to see the working group address ways in which these wooded areas could be managed for successional development.

1. **Council is encouraged by the establishment of a Hardwood Working Group in the Department of Forestry. To clarify goals and objectives, Council recommends that this group be renamed the Acadian Forest Restoration Working Group and that its primary objective be to support restoration of the Acadian Forest type in Prince Edward Island. In addition to the areas on which this working group is currently focusing, Council would like to see time and resources allocated to existing hardwood stands and ways in which they can best be managed.**

In response to questions regarding hardwoods, we were informed of efforts by the Department of Forestry to explore establishment techniques for yellow birch, white birch and white ash. According to information supplied to us, plantings of these three species in 1990 accounted for only 0.25% of the total plantings for that year. We were informed that these efforts were based on patch and strip cut techniques.

Council encourages expansion of this program in quantity of plantings, variety of species, and variety of planting techniques being explored. If staffing level is a limitation, Council supports the hiring of personnel specifically qualified to devote greater attention to these efforts.

In addition to the patch and strip cut techniques currently being studied, Council encourages exploration of underplanting techniques under a variety of cover types. Council inquired as to whether the Department of Energy and Forestry was using underplanting techniques but received no response on this matter.

2. **Council recommends expansion of hardwood reforestation techniques with respect to quantity of plantings, variety of species and variety of techniques. Council supports the hiring of qualified staff specifically to pursue this effort or, if funding is limited, the re-allocation of current resources.**

WILDLIFE

"Forests exist for more than simply the production of wood. They are also significant as habitat for wildlife."

Council was updated on Department of Energy and Forestry efforts pertaining to forest wildlife. In particular, the undertaking of avifaunal survey work and education of technical staff on woodland bird identification and ecology were noted. We were also advised of changes to the "rates and schedules" a document which dictates management practices on forests receiving government financial support. Changes include the mandatory leaving of old dead trees (snags) for wildlife when thinning operations are occurring, the leaving of brush piles near watercourses for use by wildlife, and an increase in funding for forest management operations along stream sides (riparian zones).

We commend the Department of Energy and Forestry for its allocation of resources to these areas and support efforts to expand this work in the years to come..

Future expansions should include other animal species within the forest ecosystem. When such effects are undertaken on an expanded and sustained basis, important factors pertaining to sustainable forest management will emerge. Wildlife is not only of aesthetic importance but also of fundamental importance to the very health, well-being and productivity of the forest. To further these efforts Council recommends cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the Department of Environment.

3. **Council is encouraged by increased emphasis on wildlife within the Department of Energy and Forestry. Council believes wildlife is not only of aesthetic importance but fundamental to forest health and productivity. We fully support such work and encourage expansion to include other wildlife species. Closer co-operation with the Fish and Wildlife Division would enhance this program.**

PLANTATIONS

"The forest renewal program ... should attempt to minimize large acreages composed of single species stands which are more prone to insect infestations."

Council requested information regarding efforts by the Department of Forestry to evaluate success rates and disease problems in existing softwood plantations. Although we are aware evaluation programs occurred, we received no information to fulfill this request.

In light of the age of some softwood plantations in Prince Edward Island and the continued, almost exclusive, emphasis on this style of reforestation, Council feels it is extremely important to carefully evaluate the success of these reforestation programs.

WOOD FIRED ELECTRICAL GENERATION

Council was informed by the Department of Energy and Forestry that little information exists on the effects of whole tree clearcutting on forests and soils of Prince Edward Island. Given this lack of knowledge, Council expressed its concern that a major project such as the proposed wood chip fired cogeneration plant will be based on a whole tree clearcutting technique.

On the subject of clear cuts, Council is concerned about the supply of wood for proposed electrical cogeneration plant originating only from "dead, dying, and unmerchantable wood" as suggested by the Department of Energy and Forestry. Council feels that the economics and logistics of mechanical harvesting would make an on-site distinction between "good" wood and "bad" wood unlikely. In view of this and the large amount of biomass required, Council asked the Department of Energy and Forestry for information on measures which would ensure that wood for the co-generation facility originates exclusively from "dead, dying and unmerchantable" sources. We received no reply on this matter but we suspect plans for this project are on hold while concerns such as this are being reviewed.

We urge the Department of Energy and Forestry to proceed with caution when considering the effects of a co-generation facility. The lack of knowledge and the likely magnitude of impact has members of Council concerned. It is hoped (anticipated) that the above concerns would be included in the critical areas addressed by an Environmental Impact Assessment process on the proposed co-generation facility.

4. **If the Department of Energy and Forestry intends to pursue wood-fired electrical generation, Council recommends caution. Council believes our knowledge base may be insufficient to adequately evaluate the impact of whole tree harvesting, considering the scale to which it would be applied. Council is also skeptical about the likelihood of selective extraction of only "dead,dying, and unmerchantable" wood for this project. A full Environmental Impact Assessment must be conducted before proceeding with the co-generation facility.**

CONCLUSION

The establishment of a "Hardwood Working Group" is an important step to ensuring a balanced approach to Island forestry issues. A renaming of this committee to the Acadian Forest Restoration committee, along with a clarification of goals and objectives would be of benefit. As part of this program there should be expanded emphasis on the management of existing hardwoods, including increases in quantity of plantings variety of species.

The Department of Energy and Forestry has shown encouraging initiative's in its work related to wildlife. This emphasis on wildlife in the Department of Energy and Forestry should be

expanded to include other species of wildlife. Wildlife is not merely of aesthetic interest but is of importance to forest health and productivity.

If the proposed wood-fired electric generation facility is to proceed, associated forest management strategies must be adopted with great caution. The potential for highly negative impact and a substantial added degradation of Island forests is great.

TRANSPORTATION

EROSION CONTROL

"The practices associated with construction and the maintenance of roads ... can contribute heavily to accelerated erosion."

The Department of Transportation and Public Works is a key player in environmental degradation. Activities of Transportation and Public Works are second only to agriculture in disturbing ground cover. Erosion is directly related to soil disturbance. Having a total of 5300 kilometers of roadway which must be periodically "maintained", the department manages 10,600 hectares of Island soil.

At several locations on PEI, eg. Pisquid Bridge and Midgell Bridge, Council noted construction work employed extensive use of filter fabric and other erosion control measures to prevent material displaced during the project from entering the watercourse. We commend and encourage this action. All major construction sites must be planned and financing provided to ensure similar attention to the environment.

Sites which require the greatest environmental mediation (those which are most sensitive) must be identified. An environmental specialist who could review work of both the construction and maintenance programs each year, to identify problem areas and suggest optimum timing and type of work, would minimize negative impacts.

1. **It is recommended an erosion control specialist be hired by the Department of Transportation and Public Works to provide environmental expertise.**

"The Department of Transportation and Public Works is a key player in the Conservation Strategy."

Council noted the services of a consulting firm had been secured to develop construction and maintenance guidelines to mitigate the effect of these activities on the environment. This is a first step in addressing soil erosion on a comprehensive basis. The Department is to be complimented on this environmental action.

Council commends the joint sponsoring of the soil erosion seminar by the Department of Transportation and Public Works and the Conservation Strategy. The attendance by almost 50 of the senior

staff including one of the directors, most engineers, and all district supervisors is significant. The guest speaker was the Director of the Environment Office which is part of the Ontario Ministry of Transport. He was able to provide detailed information about erosion control techniques employed during the maintenance and construction programs in Ontario.

2. **It is important that highway staff be aware of erosion problems, and the effects on the environment as well as techniques which can be employed to alleviate the problem. Consideration should be given to implementing some of the obviously beneficial programs utilized in other jurisdictions.**

There remain many places within the province where secondary roads and their associated ditches are contributing or carrying significant quantities of silt to water courses. There is a requirement for increased hydro seeding, re-establishment of ditches, construction of silt traps, etc.

3. **Each district should identify key sites where roads erode on a regular basis and result in sediments being carried to streams. Erosion at these sites could then be systematically remedied.**

<u>"With great effort to curb soil erosion a high degree of cooperation will be required."</u>

Road maintenance is largely planned on the basis of political boundaries, but environmental problems are often based on watersheds which cross these boundaries. There is need for better coordination and co-operation or for redefining highway maintenance districts to more effectively deal with environmental problems.

4. **There is a need for improved inter-district co-ordination of erosion control activities.**

Council noted large amounts of sediment entering streams from little used secondary roads. This occurs at many Island locations, especially during the spring months.

5. **The Department is encouraged to expand its program of designating roads for seasonal use only.**

The close co-operation between the Department of Transportation and Public Works and the Young Environmentalist Program of the Department of the Environment is commended. This co-operation resulted in the establishment of silt catching devices through out the province. To build on this success, these silt traps will have to be maintained.

6. **Council recommends continued cooperation between highway staff and summer youth employment programs to develop projects which will minimize erosion.**

Council commends the Department of Transportation and Public Works for using a device to prevent paint chips from entering the watercourse during the repainting of the Hillsborough Bridge.

CONCLUSION

The Department of Transportation and Public Works is obviously beginning to attach greater importance to controlling erosion stemming from highway practices. The Department has certainly initiated activities which will help reduce the erosion problem but the speed and efficiency of this implementation is of concern. An environmental specialist could help co-ordinate activities to mitigate environmental problems, perhaps resulting in a more effective program, and possibly also saving money in the long term through greater efficiency.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

COOPERATIVE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

"There are a large number of federal and provincial agencies ..., organizations, local groups and individuals concerned with the management, use and enjoyment of wildlife".

In 1990 there were many examples of Island communities initiating important habitat enhancement projects, with financial and technical support from a variety of agencies. Communities have shown increasing interest in environmental issues and a desire to enhance their local environment. This must be cultivated with continued provision of technical expertise and guidance by informed personnel.

There must be long term management plans developed for each of our watersheds in conjunction with the community and interested organizations. Management plans for rivers where habitat enhancement and research is currently being undertaken should be developed first. It is absolutely imperative that communities be involved in the development of these plans and future management projects.

There is concern that habitat management programs are currently being directed towards optimizing single habitat types. Management plans must be designed to enhance habitat for the maximum benefit of all resource uses.

1. **Wildlife management plans should be developed for the province of PEI as a whole and for individual watersheds. These plans must be developed with close co-operation of communities and interest groups. These plans should provide for the enhancement of habitat for a variety of wildlife and resource uses.**

Trout and Salmon are managed jointly by the provincial Fish and Wildlife Division and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. A Recreational Fisheries agreement which would include significant funding for habitat enhancement projects has been under discussion for a considerable length of time.

2. **It is recommended that the provincial government intensify efforts to obtain approval of an agreement which would provide funding to enhance the recreational fishery.**

MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE SPECIES

"We now must manage wildlife populations or risk extermination of some species"

While in the past provincial biologists have usually managed wildlife of greatest interest to people, (those which can be fished or hunted), the value of non-game species is rapidly becoming more evident. Recent statistics indicate Islanders spent in excess of 1.9 million dollars pursuing non-game wildlife related recreational activities. This represents 40% of all wildlife related expenditures, including hunting and fishing. The general public is becoming more concerned about endangered species. PEI has a significant component of the Piping Plover population which has recently been moved from the threatened species to the endangered species list because of diminishing numbers.

3. **For the last two years, the Environmental Advisory Council has stressed that priority be placed on non-game species management. Because of limited time of current staff, the Department of the Environment is encouraged to create a new biological position to manage non-game species within the Fish and Wildlife Division. This person would manage non game species and co-ordinate wildlife activities with the Department of Energy and Forestry.**

FISH HABITAT AND POPULATION ENHANCEMENT

"Stream degradation is the most important problem now confronting the maintenance of existing stocks of fish and wildlife in the province."

The use of federal funding sources in co-operation with provincial programs have provided the basis for a large number of habitat enhancement projects across PEI. The use of the Island Conservation Assistance Program (ICAP) to co-ordinate funding sources, secure of technical expertise and the provide funds and equipment has resulted in the implementation of many excellent stream enhancement projects in all parts of PEI. The Environmental Advisory Council strongly urges the continuation and expansion of the Island Conservation Assistance Program.

4. **Council urges the continuation and expansion of the Island Conservation Assistance Program to facilitate community and organization initiative in the environmental field.**

ECOLOGICAL RESERVES/HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AREAS

Council recommended to the Minister that a Conservation Guardian Program be established to help monitor activities in Natural Areas and locations where habitat restoration was being carried out. Council was pleased to see some financial support for this program which is being developed by the Island Nature Trust with support from the Prince Edward Island Wildlife Federation. The Department of the Environment is encouraged to continue or expand this support.

5. **Non-government organizations should be encouraged and supported in their actions directed at public education and environmental protection through the Conservation Guardian Program.**

CONCLUSION

There is need for a long term wildlife management program for each river system, as well as for the province. Communities and interest groups are eager to participate in such plans and must be encouraged to do so as bonafide partners. Wildlife provides recreational benefits for Islanders, as well as provides a significant opportunity for tourism development. For brook trout and salmon, PEI streams and rivers offer ideal water quality and temperature conditions. With habitat enhancement world class fishing is possible. Co-ordinated programs resulting in habitat restoration and enhancement should be actively encouraged by the Province.

COASTAL ZONE

ESTUARY WATER QUALITY

Some of our most valuable natural resources are estuaries and the land around them.

Council had occasion during the past year to question the health of our coastal zone and, in particular, the effect of development activities on our estuaries. The Mill River experienced several periods during the summer months where water quality deteriorated to an alarming extent. Area residents questioned the effectiveness of the sewage treatment plant at the Mill River Resort complex. Council made inquiries with respect to training provided to operators of the treatment facility, and quality of water routinely discharged from the facility.

Summerside Harbour also has had an unfortunate history of poor water quality and excessive algal blooms during peak warm periods of the summer. The annual report of the town of Summerside, did not provide Biological Oxygen Demand data for the sewage treatment facility. These data would provide a gauge for how well we manage our waste as it is released into our environment.

Council requested data on Mill River and Summerside Harbour as well as all data for the larger treatment facilities in the province. The information requested from the Department of the Environment has proved difficult to obtain. In part, this may be due to the reporting and recording system currently in use.

1. **Council feels that water quality data should be available for independent review. Disclosure of such a review would build public confidence in the mechanism in place to safeguard our coastal zone.**

The process of transferring Herring from boat to shore using a form of suction results in the deposition of Herring scales, and debris within Island Harbours. It was determined that the problem falls under jurisdiction of the federal government, and Council subsequently reported the situation to the appropriate agency.

CONCLUSION

The quality of our estuaries continues to be effected by human activities. The Department of the Environment should take a lead role in making the public aware of problems by making water quality information more available and interpreting the results to indicate the nature of the problem. Where appropriate, the

department should use existing legislation to safeguard our coastal zone. The department should continue to improve its data handling procedure to facilitate public review.

WATER MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION CONTROL

DUMPS AND SANITARY LANDFILL SITES

"Because our province is not heavily industrialized we do not suffer from the major pollution problems of more densely settled parts of the country. This does not mean pollution is not a problem."

Council was pleased to see the announcement of the new government policy for Waste Management for the 1990's. Many of the elements of this policy followed previous recommendations of Council. Government is to be commended for moving toward an appropriate waste management plan for PEI.

In early 1990, Council met with residents of the Cardigan area who were concerned with the operation of the Cardigan Regional Landfill Site. The public is becoming increasingly concerned about the appropriate management of their solid wastes and their level of awareness continues to rise. Much of the concern deals with the ongoing threat to groundwater because of inappropriate disposal of industrial and agricultural wastes in landfill sites. If drinking water is derived from groundwater, the potential hazard is obvious.

The Department of the Environment operates a system of monitoring wells surrounding many landfills, including the Cardigan site. As a result of the meeting with the Cardigan residents, Council agreed to review the testing results from the monitoring wells and to give the residents an independent assessment of the effect of the site on groundwater quality. Council requested water quality data from the Department but, these data have not yet been provided for review.

CONCLUSION

Council feels that the public has legitimate concern about the effects of solid waste landfilling on groundwater. This concern could be addressed by better informing the public on monitoring programs carried out by the Department of the Environment. Without such information, the public will be left to assume the worst, perhaps without cause.

LANDSCAPE, LAND USE PLANNING AND TOURISM

LANDSCAPE PROTECTION

"Landscape is a sustainable resource that must be viewed as a whole if it is to retain its integrity."

Several significant pieces of legislation controlling development were placed in abeyance pending review by the Royal Commission. This precluded significant legislative although some measures were temporarily put in place.

Although some detrimental land use practices slowed during the freeze in place during the review others continued. It is important that government consider the recommendations of the Royal Commission as well as input from the public when implementation is being considered.

1. **Government should address the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Land, make decisions in a relatively short period of time, and implement action.**

NATURAL AREAS

"The government should make a commitment to protect environmentally significant sites in this province."

The Council was pleased to learn of the preparation of a comprehensive Environmental Areas Plan which will provide an overall strategy for the protection of environmentally important sites which have been protected through a variety of legislative means. It is hoped that this plan will include provision for a joint funding program between non-government agencies and government.

2. **Council recommends that plans to secure protection for environmentally significant sites be strongly encouraged. Finances for acquisitions which must be part of a comprehensive protection package should be made available.**

CONCLUSION

The province should work toward securing protection for environmentally significant sites in the province. This will mean acquisition in situations where the methods of securing protection are not possible.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

We strongly recommend that the province develop an integrated, science based program of environmental and resource education appropriate to Prince Edward Island.

The EAC believes early development and implementation of a comprehensive environmental education program is of utmost urgency. The seriousness of our global and Island situation demands educational programs which are both effective and efficient in fostering positive change.

Council has reviewed the report prepared by Environmental Associates Limited entitled "Aspects of Environmental and Natural Resource Education: A PEI Perspective" and has suggested actions to initiate some of the recommendations of the study.

The public should be made aware of the needs and opportunities for environmental education through a series of public meetings. It has been suggested that the same meetings could serve as an opportunity for the public to comment on the first Conservation Strategy (now four years old) and make recommendations for an updated version.

1. **Council recommends government begin implementation of the recommendations of the Environmental Education Study. Public review of this report and the Provincial Conservation Strategy are the first steps.**

Over the long term our best hope for achieving a lasting Conservation Strategy lies in the education of our young people.

Council commends the Department of the Environment for their efforts in educating Island youth through the creation of the Young Environmentalist Program. The theoretical and practical experience resulted in increased environmental consciousness for the 42 participants.

Local projects conducted under the Young Environmentalist Program as well as the work experience component undoubtedly contributed to conservation and environmental enhancement while at the same time raising community awareness.

2. **Council urges government to continue with the Young Environmentalist Program.**

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT - OUR ISLAND ENVIRONMENT

Ways must be found to involve the whole of the Island Community in the concepts of sustainable development and stewardship of resources.

Council was very pleased with the sponsorship of the environmental workshop " Our Island Environment by the Department of the Environment". This conference was well attended by interested people from across PEI and resulted in many useful recommendations. Council hopes that the conference was the beginning of an ongoing public consultation process, but is concerned about the limited follow up. The public needs constant information updates on environmental issues to contribute valuable input. Council continues to recommend allocation of funding to expand public awareness, public education, and enforcement related to environmental matters.

3. **Council urges greater consideration be given to the recommendations resulting from the "Our Island Environment" conference.**

Council continues to support the use of Conservation Strategy funds for the Island Conservation Assistance Program (ICAP). Council was pleased to note the expansion of the program to 22 projects employing over 100 people. The funding available for projects under this program has been increased in excess of $100,000, which indicates both a strong committment by government as well as expanded public support for environmental action. This program has been further enhanced through the use of other funding sources resulting in more comprehensive projects.

4. **Council recommends expansion of the Island Conservation Assistance program to increase public awareness through community environmental projects.**

Communities and environmental organizations are strongly supportive of environmental projects. Although the organizers are doing an excellent job of monitoring and directing activities, there are times when outside advice is required. Several departments, both federal and provincial are involved in providing guidance. However, there remains a need for enhanced co-operation and support by government agencies.

5. **Council urges greater cooperation between government departments and environmental project managers to facilitate and augment the success of ICAP supported projects.**

Council was pleased to note the initiation of the Conservation Guardian Program by the Island Nature Trust and the PEI Wildlife Federation. This program had financial support from the private sector (Shell Oil) and the Department of the Environment. The program involve volunteers who will monitor selected environmentally important sites. This will increase public involvement, as well as reduce the requirement for government input.

6. **Council urges continued encouragement and support of the Conservation Guardian Program.**

Council has expressed concern that some government programs currently available to promote and enhance environmental awareness, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, are not being used to their full potential. The Environmental Advisory Council stresses that all government departments must make every effort to promote the use of programs directly benefit the environment or increase awareness and knowledge about the environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

A system of Conservation awards should be developed to provide recognition of those who have made noteworthy contributions and to heighten awareness of conservation activities.

Council was pleased to have judged the applications for the PEI 1990 Environmental Awards. The successful recipients in the appropriate categories were as follows:

Industry:	Georgetown Packers
Individual:	Dave Biggar
Organization:	Environmental Coalition of PEI
Educator:	John Hughes

Council was also pleased to have judged environmental projects at the provincial science fair. Prizes were provided in the name of the PEI Conservation Strategy.

It is important that the public be appraised of the efforts and actions of individuals and organizations with respect to environmental endeavors.

7. **Government is encouraged to continue to recognize Island residents and organizations having demonstrated efforts in the environmental field.**

A conservation newsletter should be published on a regular basis.

The Environmental Advisory Council recommended the establishment of an environmental newsletter.

8. **Council recommends the establishment of an environmental newsletter.**

CONCLUSION

Education is the basis for sound individual, community, or government action. Education affects all areas outlined in the Conservation Strategy. Thus, all departments should assume responsibility for incorporation and dissemination of the latest information concerning the environment. Adherence to established environmentally beneficial principles and to those which may be established through research, as well as discontinuation of practices which have proven unacceptable, will occur only with enhanced environmental knowledge.

LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

"A quality environment requires more restriction"

1990 represented the first full year of formal Environmental Impact Assessments in Prince Edward Island. Council participated in the development of the draft guidelines for an Environmental Impact Assessment process. As Council monitored the application of the process to a variety of significant projects and a number of recommendations were made to government.

A major theme which consistently ran through our comments pertains to industrial developments based upon Island resources. There is a tendency to focus Environmental Impact Assessment on direct pollution, related impacts. Wastewater effluent, air pollution and noise pollution are examples of such direct effects. More difficult to assess but of equal, if not greater,r importance in PEI, are effects on the land base itself.

In the case of new or expanding potato processing plants, the Environmental Advisory Council felt the Environmental Impact Assessment should include an appraisal of the current state of the soil resource and how it will be impacted by increased pressure on land. Excluding such a consideration from the scope of Environmental Impact Assessment throws into question the ability of the Environmental Impact Assessment process to adequately assess the true environmental impact. This is especially true in the case of potato processing where the single greatest environmental impact of increased production is likely to be increased soil degradation.

Council expressed these concerns repeatedly during the course of the year, with reference to Environmental Impact Assessment of both the new McCain's facility and the proposed Cavendish Farms facility expansion. We were informed that land degradation resulting from increased potato production would not be considered as an impact of the plant but rather as an ongoing concern associated with the agricultural industry.

Council does not agree with this perspective. The soils of Prince Edward Island are under intense pressure. Their degradation is the most significant environmental problem facing this province. Environmental Impact Assessment of any project which will increase pressure on the soil and hence accelerate soil degradation must include this impact in its scope.

In the case of the proposed wood-chip fired cogeneration plant, Council expressed concern that impact on Island forests be considered in addition to the direct effect such as air pollution.

1. **Environmental Impact Assessment processes in Prince Edward Island should formally require consideration of project impacts on the Island resource base. As specific examples, Environmental Impact Assessment of any project likely to further degrade Island soils or forest must include consideration of these factors.**

In the case of food-processing projects involving liquid effluent, existing Federal guidelines may be inappropriate to the situation in Prince Edward Island. Council expressed concern about this matter on several occasions. Federal regulations under the Fisheries Act for potato processing facilities base allowable **B**iological **O**xygen **D**emand (BOD) levels and **S**uspended **S**olid (SS) loadings on the volume of food being processed by the facility. It is of particular importance in Prince Edward Island that such guidelines/regulations be based on the size and nature of the receiving body of water. With the extent and variety of bays, estuaries, and inlets in Prince Edward Island and the degree to which the Island environment is dependent on these features, this inadequacy of federal regulations cannot be overstated.

We were given encouraging indications that in the case of the proposed Cavendish Farms expansion, the assimilative capacity of the receiving water body would be considered. We were informed that such assessment would be conducted for the traditional parameters, **B**iological **O**xygen **D**emand and **S**uspended **S**olids as well as several other parameters. Council would like to encourage the adoption of regulations which formally require such evaluations.

2. **Council recommends the development of regulations governing effluent from food processing operations in Prince Edward Island. The rationale for these regulations should be based primarily on the ability of the receiving body of water to assimilate the effluent.**

Public participation in the EIA process is of special interest to Council. In the case of the McCain's facility EIA process, we expressed our view that the short amount of time for public viewing of documents was inadequate.
Another concern was the financial costs incurred by the public in order to participate. During the recent Greenwich and Boughton Island land development controversies, significant debt was incurred by citizen's wishing to make presentations to the Land Use Commission. On several occasions, Council expressed its view that intervenor funding be made formally available to such groups in order to allow adequate participation in Environmental Impact Assessment or public hearing processes.

3. **Council recommends the improvement of government support for public participation in Environmental Impact Assessment and public hearing processes. Council feels adequate time for public review of documents and adequate funding for meaningful intervenor participation are two critical components of this support.**

MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

During the year, the Natural History Society contacted Council concerning the lack of government monitoring and enforcement at Boughton Island. According to the Natural History Society, a management agreement between developers and government was breached. Members of the Society identified the infraction and notified government. They expressed to us their concern that government was not actively monitoring adherence to the management agreement.

Council conveyed these concerns to the Departments of Environment and Community and Cultural Affairs. It is fundamental to the credibility of any process that all government monitoring obligations be honored.

4. **Government should honour all monitoring responsibilities which it acquires as a result of any planning or assessment process. This is particularly true in cases involving significant public participation. Situations should not be allowed to develop where members of the public witness the breach of agreements and despite notification of the appropriate government agencies, fail to see action.**

NATURAL AREAS PROTECTION ACT

"The landscape of Prince Edward Island defines the personality of the province."

The Environmental Advisory Council reviewed the proposal for the designation under the Natural Areas Protection Act. of the first privately owned property and recommended the property be designated as a site.

5. **Council urges continuation of the program to protect environmentally important areas in PEI. Designation under the Natural Area Protection Act is one method of securing this protection.**

CONCLUSION

It is of importance in Prince Edward Island that Environmental Impact Assessment of projects likely to impact on Island soils and forests include such in their scope.

Regulations governing liquid effluent from food processing facilities, based primarily on the size and nature of the receiving water body, should be developed and implemented.

Government support for public participation in all environmental planning and assessment processes requires improvement. Two key areas for improvement are intervenor funding and the provision for adequate time for public scrutiny.

It is of utmost importance that government honour all monitoring responsibilities acquired during any planning or assessment process.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The following is a list of Environmental Advisory Council items that did not fall into the categories listed elsewhere in this report.

1. Review of possible use of a biological insecticide for blackflies.

   The Environmental Advisory Council reviewed a proposal to use the biological insecticide "Vectobac" in Island streams to reduce the numbers of black flies. This product's active ingredient, Bacillus thuriengiensis Var. Israelensis, has been shown to be specific for black flies and mosquitoes. Nevertheless, Council recommends establishment of a program to determine indirect effects on wildlife prior to approving use this insecticide on Island streams.

2. Trespassing and Fishing

   Council reviewed trespass restrictions faced by fishermen. Although the fish are crown resource, belonging to everybody, fishing access can be prevented under current regulations. To permit access to fishing sites, Council recommends that the stream bed of all streams greater than two meters in width, should belong to the crown.

3. Habitat Stamp

   Council suggested that a fund-raising fish habitat stamp similar to that used on the federal migratory bird permit would augment funds for watercourse restoration programs.

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APPENDIX A

Recommendations to the Federal Pesticide Registration Review Team

A SUBMISSION TO THE FEDERAL REGISTRATION REVIEW TEAM

IN RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED REVISED FEDERAL PEST MANAGEMENT

REGULATORY SYSTEM

by

Gary Reid and Bruce Smith

Environmental Advisory Council

to

Minister of the Environment

Province of PEI

September 25, 1990.

For some time, the PEI Advisory Council has been concerned with pesticide use and the potential for adverse health and environmental effects within this province. Recognizing that agriculture plays a major economic role in PEI, and that current agricultural practice is chemically oriented, the Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposal to revise the pest management regulatory system.

To comment first on the process, we view positively the concept of consensus-building of a multi-stakeholder review committee. In addition, solicitation of public input during the review process is also a positive step in assuring that the final proposals will address the concerns of the greatest number of Canadians possible. While, no doubt, some deficiencies will remain, the process appears to be the most satisfactory one to minimize deficiencies.

The Review Committee has requested that responses address the proposal in light of the six fundamental principles that guided the Review Team. This response will be brief, and attempt to do this in light of the concerns that we have in the PEI perspective. Although we feel that PEI has unique problems associated with pest management, the solutions to these problems will no doubt contribute to the betterment of pest management nationally.

With respect to openness, the proposal goes a long way in insuring that the public have access to the information upon which decisions are made. We agree that an informed public is more accepting of these decisions. The provision of a Regulatory Advisory Panel provides a quasi-right to appeal, but no formal appeal process is apparent for direct public appeal to the Ministers.

The Review Team has done an admirable job of completing the task of seeking public input within the time frame allotted to it. However, we must point out that seeking meaningful public response from end-users in PEI at this time of year is not realistic. with the harvest season upon us, it will be surprising to find find members of the farming community able to take the time to make considered responses. Moreover, the schedule set out for the review Team as it crosses Canada does not seem to provide much time for thoughtful consideration of each submission. It can only be hoped that the submissions will be given due consideration from the written record.

Regarding openness to labeling information, it is noted that Material Safety Data Sheets will be available for those products where MSDS are required by WHMIS. No such provision is available for Domestic products, and information for safe storage, handling, use and disposal of these products should be provided. In PEI, Domestic products misuse presents a potential threat to

the groundwater sources, and a significant proportion of residential dwellings do not have public water sources available to them. In keeping with the intent of openness in providing safety and use information to commercial products, extension of this information to Domestic products should be carried out.

No provision is made for safe disposal of Domestic products via recycling or other method. As one of the Federal-Provincial initiatives deals with collection and disposal of pesticide waster, we urge the inclusion of Domestic products in this initiative.

Regarding the model's ability to protect health, safety and the environment, we feel several comments could be made. We commend the Review Team for proposing the Pest Management Promotion Office. Although we recognize that controversy exists as to the definition of sustainability, we support the concept of pest management from a sustainable point of view. We encourage development of alternative pest management strategies that present acceptable environmental impact.

With specific reference to data requirements for registration, we wish to comment on some areas of concern from the PEI perspective. These concerns have to do with end-use application, both with aerial and ground application.

Agricultural spraying in PEI is generally carried out on fields of smaller size than comparable operations in other areas of Canada. Spray drift to adjacent areas is of concern with both ground and air application. Little data is available as to expected drift under varying weather conditions, type of application, sprayer design, etc. How can adequate buffer zones be established, for example, when no indication of spray drift can be determined. We realize that there is a myriad of spray conditions, sprayer types, and application methods, but we feel that standards should be established for appropriate spray application on a product by product basis. It seems appropriate that part of the decision process for registration give consideration to the effectiveness of the product in specific conditions of application. We recommend that these data be collected by the registrant as part of the registration process. These data will then form the basis for recommended buffer zones on a product by product (and application by application) basis.

A key part of the protection of health and the environment lies with the proposed federal-provincial initiatives. We urge that the areas of national concern outlined in the proposal be dealt with expeditiously, but we caution that some of these areas should be federally mandated. For example, the proposal calls for national guideline to be developed for the safe reuse, recycling, collection, storage and disposal of containers. Obviously, this concerns the national distribution networks of

generally large national and multi-national companies. It is not reasonable to assume that individual provinces will be able to deal effectively with these national networks. Nor is it fair to suggest that companies play by a dozen sets of rules in recycling containers or wastes. In our opinion, this could be accomplished as part of the regulatory process, by instituting a compulsory deposit on commercial containers attractive from the end-users point of view at minimal additional expense. Producers would be accepting the responsibility of good product husbandry with the added benefit of reduced packaging costs. Such a deposit system has been in effect in the chemical industry for many years.

In concluding our comments, we would like to bring to your attention several points regarding other aspects of the proposal. Regarding responsiveness of the proposal, it is not clear how the Pest Management Committee will interact with the Pest Control Management Office in making recommendations to the Ministers. Indeed, at first reading, the function of the Committee seems to be to circumvent the regulatory process by acting somewhat independently of the process. We urge that the administrative structure of the system be clarified to clearly define each role.

The policy also proposes to develop data requirements for new pest control measures. We recommend that these be developed with as much public and stakeholder input as possible. Consideration should be given to both mode of action and environmental impact with application or use. Alternative methods can offer much promise, but could pose more problems without careful research.

Finally, we point to a concern with the Minor Use Label Expansion Program (MULEP) and the Minor Use Registration (MUR). It is apparent that both health and environmental concerns should be addressed in these programs. Residue levels are an important concern, and while the proposal identifies this concern, it refers to them as "where applicable", or "where residues levels warrant". We suggest that these ambiguities be removed from the proposal to make sure these MRL's are established. In addition, we urge that use data be as complete as possible, to ensure that optimum application procedures and adequate buffer zones can be established.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposal, we commend the Review Team for its efforts in presenting what we view as a positive step in improving the current system. We hope that you will find merit in the comments we have made, and that they will find their way into the regulatory system.